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## I.—CICERO, AN APPRECIATION.

*Alén ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων.*

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.—The Editor of the American Journal of Philology is too much of an editor not to avail himself of the generous, perhaps too generous, offer of Professor Sihler to anticipate the slower progress of the Yale University Press, an offer which makes it possible to enliven the opening pages of the new volume of the Journal, in its new dress, by the concluding chapter of the author's forthcoming work on Cicero, a companion to the Annals of Caesar, the two, together with the Testimonium Animae, forming the crown of the conscientious labor of many years—monuments of personal investigation, personal conviction, personal expression.

Cicero from early boyhood established the habit to outdo and outshine his competitors and his contemporaries. Ambition was the atmosphere in which he lived, the task-mistress of his entire life. He was by no means primarily and chiefly a man of letters. He must not be conceived as a *littérateur* who somehow dabbled in politics or stumbled into public life. He was trained for it as fully and as thoroughly as any member of the officeholding aristocracy. As a mere stripling he chose for his models and ideals the most eminent orators then in public life: the secret of their power and the several forms of excellence of each of them he sought to ascertain with keen persistence, and from Accius the venerable poet of his boyhood he sought comprehension and valuation of the oratory of the past. His personality is unique in that he sought vocational training with unremitting devotion, but that

at the same time no Roman ever confronted the Greek humanities with a more liberal eagerness of appropriation than he did, nor with more catholic taste. An admirer of erudition wherever he met it, his character was too large, his eagerness to play a great rôle in his own generation was too lively to permit him to become a mere sciolist or antiquarian. The *grammatici* who arranged the verse of Lucilius in his childhood were humble folk, and his own keen and incessant matching of the slender resources of his native speech against the wealth and perfection of Greek letters made him what he became, and he found during his apprenticeship of life no more efficient an instrument for power than to translate Greek into Latin. He dearly loved Ennius, whose Annals furnished him ideals of civic excellence, and no one could be less a Greekling than Cicero in surveying the great figures of both nationalities. Still his culture was essentially Greek. His great aim was to make of his native speech an instrument of power and an organ of varied expression not less pliable nor versatile than his Greek models.

He remains one of the great figures in the history of human culture. Living among a folk where utilitarianism was bred in the bone, he still counted it a felicity whenever he could connect his own taste, his political aspirations, his spiritual admiration with recorded excellence. Such elements to absorb, such ideals to establish was, in a manner his unvarying aim. He was such a master of Greek that he could debate with the most eminent rhetoricians of Greece and Asia Minor in their own tongue and match them on their own stage; so ready was he in Greek oratory that he could address the council of Syracuse in their native speech. Whereas many Romans of his own generation had in Greek citation a fashionable command comparable to their possession of Greek paintings and sculpture, to Cicero these things meant a doubling (or more) of his intellectual personality. He was bilingual in a way, but in his political consciousness he felt himself superior to the Greeks, and not merely to the adroit and servile folk who as slaves or favored freedmen formed the entourage of Roman aristocracy in his own generation, but he claimed that the greatest worthies of pre-Alexandrian times, those soldiers and statesmen of classic Greece could be

matched in overwhelming numbers from the Annals of Ennius. And thus he held, though Plato, Aristotle's dialogues, Dicaearchus, furnished him clews, incentives, theories. When, in 49-48 B. C. Pompey seemed about to base his strategy on seapower, the parallel of Themistocles at once presented itself to his practical reflection. When for one brief year he held proconsular sway in Cilicia, his Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* was his veritable breviary, scrolls which as he wrote to the echo of his conscience, Atticus, he had fairly read to pieces. Mankind will never more extol Cicero to that point of veneration in which Petrarch, the pathfinder of Humanism held him: the time will never return when imitation of Cicero could place men close to popes and emperors, the crabbed imitation of Ciceronianism will never again be admired as the consummation of human power, but the great place of Cicero in the history of Latin letters and of the Latin tongue cannot be moved or shaken.

It is futile to place Caesar's Latinity on a level with that of the man who in a way, created Latin prose style, and whose literary consciousness was delicately and throbbingly aware of the greatest as well of the smallest things. Theory, contemplation, taste, valuation and analysis, no less than many graces of Isocratean art he brought for the first time into the Latin tongue which then, in its cultural aspects, had been but a circumscribed isle within a veritable ocean of Greek civilization, and which had been far from being that instrument of a world-power and of imperialism which Cicero himself was destined to make it through his published works.

Ennius and Lucilius, in the Augustan age, were set aside and became antiquated through the more perfect and finished verse of Horace and Vergil. But no one ever performed that feat in the specific domains of Cicero's authorship in Latin prose. Unless some *grammaticus* or antiquarian preserved some slender fragments—what do we know of the oratory of Caesar, Caelius, Curio, Calvus, Brutus, Asinius or Messalla? Cicero, an encyclopedic nature, was at the same time a versatile genius. In his alert mind there was a certain universality. And he knew it. No Roman of his own time was like him in this respect. In a way he was the first of the Humanists. His interest in applied

psychology, in political science, in that form of practical dialectic which we call argumentation, and above all his interest in the most casual and apparently inconsequential details of his particular *techné*, the Rhetorical Art, from Gorgias to Hermagoras and further—was sweeping, keen, restless and progressive. He came to sway and dominate his time with his pen even more than with his voice and educated the rapidly widening Latin world by furnishing it with models and standards even before he arrived at life's meridian line. The neo-Atticism of Calvus and Brutus he met by admirable and temperate valuations and surveys. His unhorsing of Hortensius he accomplished at thirty-six—a consummation which his deep ambition had pursued for eleven years: the tone of his published Verrines is one of victorious gratification. He knew much more definitely than we can now know or feel with him, that he had to make his own way in an aristocratic society buttressed by tradition<sup>1</sup> and privilege, that no consulate was laid in his cradle as was the case with those who bore names such as Marcellus, Metellus, Claudius, Aemilius or Domitius. And so he rose as swiftly as the traditions of the Roman republic permitted, avoiding however, with the deliberateness of deep conviction, the Tribune of the Plebs. The assertiveness of his aspirations and achievements he shared with the majority of classic writers and men of parts. Humility has no place at the Olympian board of the Greek Epic, nor shall we be able to discover it among the ethical categories of the Stoic school. It was then, as we have intimated, his tremendous and consistent industry and the fruit thereof, his forensic excellence, which opened to the Arpinate the doors of the Great Council and made his social beginnings a negligible factor. The restless and darting wit of his tongue proved an evil influence for the serenity and felicity of his life. Those who are accustomed to the perpetual applause of their sudden and incalculable scintillations will on the whole be more feared and admired than loved. The ductile character of an advocate's professional intellect, his habit of emphasizing his strong points, the frequent necessity of palliating some points weak

<sup>1</sup> Note: And so Horace still wrote: Est ut . . hic generosior Descendat in Campum petitor C. 3, 1, 10.

in dialectic or in ethics, by adroit appeals to emotion or prejudice, these are not in themselves favorable to the formation of a dominating vein of exclusive or absolute truth-seeking. The constant craving for applause is one of the unwholesome concomitants of supreme oratory: this craving the great orator, who is also a great artist, has in common with great artists in other spheres.

In the domain of philosophy Cicero excels more as a lucid and effective expositor of tenets, schools and sects than as the firm or consistent adherent of any one school. The swift production of his latter years was largely due to the necessity of finding some congenial occupation when the independence of political oratory was at an end, or to soothe his own soul in deep sorrow. But in this larger view a few salient matters must not remain unrecorded. Cicero did not design in some slipshod and superficial way to imitate or reproduce Plato. The two schools which still were very much alive, which were a positive intellectual force in that world, were Stoicism and the Ethics of Epicurus. *Their* presentation of great problems he essayed, for Latin; to them he bore conscious and positive attitudes of assent or dissent. The essentially negative and analytic drift of the Academy, especially as championed by Carneades he was fond of bringing forward. For this his advocate's consciousness had from the first a very real affinity and appreciation. He could not but be an eclectic: to furnish his mind far beyond the dry routine of courts and civil law, he needed axiom, principle, sentiment, parallels, ideals from all quarters; schools apart, he was supremely susceptible to grace, to truth in any form, to loftiness of character and precept. But he was not strong enough, to illustrate by his own conduct, amid uncommon trials and tribulations the firmness and consistency which he admired in the Stoic system, which he witnessed in Cato. To his professional consciousness the older history of Rome was a series of *exempla*, ideals these and incentives, whereas the antiquarian delving of Varro failed to rouse his deeper interest. That Roman Republic which furnished him patterns and ideals ended with the sudden and mysterious death of Scipio Aemilianus (129 B. C.). He eagerly hoped that Pompey might be a second Aemilianus, while he himself was to furnish the Laelius in this combina-

tion. From his early youth he lived in a period of political disintegration and still, the older he grew, the more fervidly was he attached to, nay consecrated to the ideal of a conservative settlement of the government. It is quite wonderful to see with what lofty tenacity he adhered to these convictions and refused to sell his rare talents to any project of autocratic rule. His life was contained in an epoch where swift and enormous expansion of empire went hand in hand with, nay quickened and accelerated the dissolution of the old city-republic. Likewise it aided the rise through the loot of East and West of powerful political individuals, wielders of a peculiar but distinctly extra-constitutional power, which may be reduced without any violence of historical analysis, to the elemental factors of armies and money. Mommsen, Caesar's acolyte, has vigorously swung the censer over that "monarchy", simply by dubbing it so, but sober historiography cannot any longer rest content with his Hegelian worldspirit and with his contemptuous scolding of Caesar's opponents. It was notably the towering Julius who with deep design and consistent perseverance hastened that disintegration and largely through his legions and Gallic gold, became too powerful to permit any longer the old routine of electoral purchases and provincial exploitation by members of the old families. Moral and social decadence, enormously fed and fostered by that same exploitation, marks the epoch of Cicero's manhood and aging years. No woman ever moved him away from the right, and his personal tastes seem to have been simple always, but he was impotent in that generation to communicate to son and nephew those loftier principles, through which he kept clear and pure his own skirts amid the putrescence of the times. His own writings impressively mirror that decadence, though not in the pathological way of Catullus,—a decadence, which for its mad luxury and profusion required the income of great provinces, and sold senatorial recognition to foreign states and potentates. Cicero witnessed such practices, but kept clear of them, often with a sarcastic sneer directed at members of the aristocracy who eagerly pursued that current form of income. His magnificent defense of Sicily placed and kept his public conduct on a high level and his administration at Tarsus and Laodicea illustrated his purer principles and made proof of his

resolute will to follow justice and humanity in dealing with those subjects of Rome. And still he fell before the temptations of a petty vanity which he had so often censured in others, and sought to gain the public glory of a triumph for curbing the looting tribes of the Amanus mountains.

Cicero's intellect was swift and eminently successful in discerning and seizing points and principles: He was, and he felt himself to be, a disciple of Philo, of Antiochus, of Posidonius. Unfortunately this splendid faculty was coupled with excessive sensitiveness in the domain of feeling and emotion. He was also, like many others not born into socially or politically secured positions, quick to take offence. But, as Pollio correctly said in his history of the Civil War, he was not equally consistent in carrying to conclusion the greater feuds of his public career. An author who is also prominent in public life, has, in a way, a double personality and is more vulnerable than others. He lacked phlegm too much, and wore, as we say, his heart upon his sleeve. And still he could compose political and social epistles, suppressing or glossing over, with consummate worldly wisdom, his real sentiments and his deeper convictions. Noble sentiments which he found in his Greek authors were quickly appropriated and found lifelong lodgement in his consciousness. They often became, to his inner and nobler life, vital and vitalizing forces, mottoes, principles, herald calls, pillars of fire by night, to guide him in the ever increasing desolation and gloom of the political world. His struggle for law and order, his defense of property and vested rights in the Catilinarian crisis, confirmed and definitely fixed his position as what we may call that of a philosophical conservative, who saw but few optimates in his actual world who were worthy of the searching and truer appellation of *The Best*. Of the 'wretched plebs, ever on the point of starvation, the chronic leech of the treasury' he had but a mean opinion and deeply regretted that this proletariat wielded the electoral franchise. In his profession as counsel to the capitalists he was intimately brought into contact with every problem of business and investment as these things extended from the forum to the vast periphery of provinces. In striving for the consulate he had sought and won the support of Pompey. This was a practical necessity for



his ambition, but it involved no acceptance of a dynast nor a profession of popular politics. His morbid sensitiveness as well as pride in his own advancement had tempted him to assume in his earlier forensic career, a somewhat defiant attitude towards the pretensions of the aristocracy of birth. With all this it is shallow malice, to call him a trimmer. Least of all does he deserve any disesteem in that entire domain, where we look for fidelity to convictions and for political consistency. His distrust of the Tribunate as a Roman institution was unvarying and deepseated from the beginning. To his political judgement and to his historical survey it made impossible any genuine unity and untrammelled autonomy of the Roman commonwealth. The records made in that office by the leading popular politicians he reprobated, from Tiberius Gracchus to P. Clodius Pulcher. He identified himself unreservedly with those members of the privileged class who caused or brought about the destruction of Cornelia's great sons. Neither these nor Livius Drusus received at his hands any fair or just appreciation. He was deeply convinced that a paternal or supervising attitude toward the plebeian electorate on the part of the senate was an ideal of government and political wisdom. His deepest ambition was set upon attaining, through the activities of his consular office, and through a policy of prevention, a distinction, in no wise inferior to that gained in the field and confirmed by a triumph. There was great personal pride in Cicero's political conduct, which pride elevates him immeasurably above the mere politician who sails with wind and tide and privately measures all by his competence. A genuine perception as to his personal resourcelessness after his restoration from exile, made him consent to lean upon the dynasts and occasionally to support their measures. At the same time this was the period when he more and more withdrew from public life and began to conceive nobler tasks, summing up his own powers and his political creed and whatever he held dear in culture and civic conviction. His pen in fact was mainly that which furnished him an alternative of living whenever the *patronus* and senator, from political and civic self-respect determined to withdraw from these spheres. Caesar touched not a hair of his head nor took an *as* from his estate after Pharsalos

and the anxious year of semi-exile at Brundisium. Of all the great autocrats of history Julius Caesar was the most generous as long as he could be. Still, when Caesar's regency was an accomplished fact, Cicero condemned it with a certain indirection, not only by avoiding the Senate-house now so largely filled with 'Caesar's centurions', but even abstained from appearing in the courts now so largely presided over by praetors designated by the Regent, whose very name and more than mortal honors ever reminded the Republican scholar of the Tusculanum of the sad battlefields of the Civil War. Cicero's abomination of the politician Caesar was so deep and strong that he was unable to judge with fairness the nobler qualities of Aurelia's son, except in one passage of contrast with Antony, a delineation which is indeed among the finest things done in Latin (2 Phil. 116).

The three great conflicts of Cicero's career were those with Catiline, with Clodius, and with Antony. His own generation was largely inclined to view them as personal feuds, especially the second and the third one. But he insisted on rating them differently. He saw himself in these contentions as the champion of great and noble principles, sound morals, the purer traditions of the past, the stronger and truer republic of Cato the Censor and of Scipio Aemilianus. He felt as one surrounded by a cloud of witnesses, the shades of the past, the choir invisible of Roman worthies, who, as in the Dream of Scipio, were translated from this narrow and treacherous earth to live by themselves in bliss, in a heaven of civic immortality. In Cicero there was a continuous conflict of two voices which never chimed in harmony, that of the scholar and idealist on the one hand, and that of the practical man of the world, husband of Terentia, father-in-law of Piso, Crassipes and Dolabella. The latter needed and sought material success. The fond and voracious reader, working in his 'Lyceum', the garden-library of his estate in the Alban hills, the student of noble thoughts and lofty principles—this is the one of these two Ciceros, the one whom we justly cherish and honor and consider it not unimportant to transmit him to further generations. But we must not overlook the other one.

This is the young aspirant for fame and distinction, son of

the quiet and retired gentlemen of moderate wealth, born in the highlands of the upper Liris, amid a simple and unspoiled folk of yeomen. The aristocracy had splendid mansions particularly on the Palatine, where their luxury held high revel, and where a silly anecdote would have the Arpinate susceptible to the beaming beauty of Clodia, the Lesbia of Catullus; and Cicero's purchase of a mansion on this very Palatine, a mansion which had belonged to the richest man among this rich aristocracy and his relations—however temporary—to Antony in Macedon, and to P. Sulla, are not pleasant reading for those who like to believe him flawless.

In the Alban hills again he made himself a residence among this proud and exclusive folk, and in the Newport of the same society where from Cumae and Puteoli one looks out upon that gulf of Paradise, or where, by Pompeii still another villa nestled at the foot of Vesuvius, where Rome in miniature (*pusilla Roma*) took the waters or vigorously amused itself—there too his villas were contiguous to theirs. This social satisfaction, however, did not lessen—it increased enormously his insistence on his personal merit, on his unaided industry, on his attainment of being the social peer of those who bore the historical names of the imperial commonwealth.

Few personages of all time, no one personality of classic antiquity is so well known to us as he. Few men have left so large a body of extremely private correspondence to the tender mercies of a curious and dissecting world. Every chambered cell of his growing life lies revealed. Every foible, every passing mood, lie before us as though we observed his heartbeat through a casement of glass. His infinite sensitiveness no less than his swift and sure intelligence, his fears and prejudices, his rancour, his faculty of fathomless hatred are turned toward our gaze, no less than his nobler aspiration for justice, equity and righteousness. His was a warmly beating heart; few men in all history have been so resolutely grateful as Marcus Tullius Cicero. On the other hand his cast of temperament and will compels us to rate him somewhat lower than Caesar in the domain of forgetting and forgiving. The volcanic passion of his vindictiveness even now may cause our souls to shudder and tremble with a very positive horror. The deep intellectuality of the man himself is

revealed in his last years, especially after the death of the only one of his children who seemed to deserve his strongest affection. He had buried his Tullia—he was himself desolate and bared of joy and hope, like a tree in December. He had heard the knell of almost all of his ideals, the world in which he went on living was dreary to him, for it was vicious, frivolous, shallow, decadent. ‘It was within the power of Themistocles to live a life of leisure, it was within the choice of Epaminondas, it was—that I may not go into ancient or foreign spheres—it was permitted *to me*: But somehow there is deeply rooted in the mind a certain presentiment of future ages, and this is both quickened to life most in the greatest intellects and in the loftiest souls, and also it is most readily revealed in them. If this were cancelled, who would be so imbecile as always to live in toil and danger?’ (Tuscul. Disp. I, 33).

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